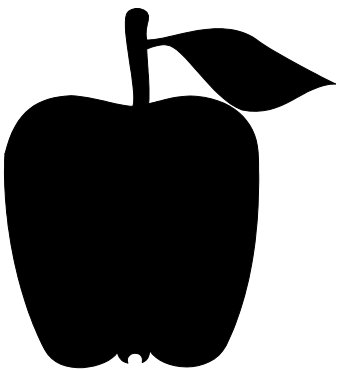




Salvaging Flood-Damaged Orchards



Drain orchards as soon as possible by digging new drainage or by pumping. Standing water may cause root suffocation. Apple and pear trees are slightly more resistant to root suffocation than stone-fruit trees. Dormant trees can be submerged longer—sometimes up to a month—and survive. However, the longer root systems are submerged, the greater the possibility for damage.

Cover exposed roots with soil or mulch to protect roots from freezing. Unlike the above-ground portion of trees, roots do not become winter hardy. They may be severely injured if left exposed.

Set up trees that have been knocked down or washed out. Straighten trees while the soil is still wet, but work carefully to avoid breaking roots. Use props, stakes or guy wires for anchorage. Stakes are better if they can be driven deep enough to give adequate support, since props and guy wires make cultivation more difficult. In orchards where floods are frequent, a "dead man" buried 18 to 24 inches will provide more permanent anchorage than props or stakes.

Remove silt from roots. If a foot or more of silt has been deposited around trees, root systems may suffer from lack of oxygen. Remove heavy silt deposits.

Delay fertilization. Do not fertilize exposed feeder roots until they have been covered. Then use less than the usual amount of fertilizer to avoid burning the roots. Broadcasting rather than banding fertilizer will reduce the likelihood of damage.

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Document DH-093,
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To prevent further erosion, use brush, prunings or other material to block gullies. Don't let small gullies become big ones. Keep heavy equipment out of orchards with wet soil. Wheeled vehicles in soft ground make ruts which can increase erosion. Grow permanent cover crops in frequently flooded orchards. (However, it is better to avoid flood plains and other frequently flooded areas when first selecting orchard sites.)